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RHMFIUU/USFJ PRIORITY
INFO RUEHFK/AMCONSUL FUKUOKA 7957
RUEHOK/AMCONSUL OSAKA KOBE 1769
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SIPDIS

STATE FOR I/RF, PA/PR/FPC/W, IIP/G/EA, EAP/PD, R/MR,
EAP/J, EAP/P, PM;
USTR FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE;
TREASURY FOR OASIA/IMI;
SECDEF FOR OASD/PA;
CP BUTLER OKINAWA FOR AREA FIELD OFFICE;
PACOM HONOLULU FOR PUBLIC DIPLOMACY ADVISOR

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SUBJECT: TOKYO MEDIA REACTION - U.S.-JAPAN

ROW OVER FUTENMA RELOCATION

11. LEAD STORIES: Most Wednesday morning papers front-paged press remarks on Tuesday by Prime Minister Hatoyama, who said that he would like to spend several months looking for a new site for the Futenma Replacement Facility (FRF).

12. "Apprehension Mounting over Hatoyama Diplomacy" On the GOJ policy of postponing its decision on Futenma relocation until next year, the liberal Asahi editorialized (12/9): "It is a matter of course for the prime minister to take advantage of the historic change of administration to try to reduce the excessive security burden on Okinawa, which has lasted more than 60 years. Nevertheless, the Hatoyama administration must make efforts to take the proper procedures, develop such ideas into realistic policies, and gain the trust and consent of the U.S., which is Japan's ally. Taking ambiguous attitudes by saying 'please be patient,' or 'the Henoko plan is still an option,' while neglecting to carry out those steps would damage the alliance and run the risk of undermining Japan's security. The prime minister should be aware that the prospects of achieving a breakthrough in line with the GOJ policy are quite dim. The prime minister must first rebuild mutual trust with the U.S., which will be the foundation for renegotiation."

13. "It Is Wrong To Put off Decision without Prospects" The top-circulation, moderate Yomiuri asserted in an editorial (12/9): "If Japan puts forward an idea of moving MCAS Futenma out of Okinawa, the collaborative efforts made by the U.S. and Japan for the past 13 years will be reduced to nothing. The agreed-upon relocation plan will go back to square one. Was the prime minister aware of the profound consequences of this decision when he made it? ... The problem is that there will be no prospects [for a breakthrough] even if

a decision on the location of the FRF is delayed until next year. No realistic candidate sites will be found in locations other than Okinawa."

¶4. "Avoid Making Futenma into Permanent Fixture" The liberal Mainichi wrote (12/9): "In the event that a government-to-government accord is scrapped, the party that calls for a review is obligated to put forward an idea that will be satisfactory to the other party. The Social Democratic Party, which strongly insists on moving Futenma out of Okinawa, as well as the prime minister, who attaches importance to maintaining the coalition government, should acknowledge this point. The Futenma issue must not be allowed to become a flash point that rocks the entire U.S.-Japan alliance. The prime minister, who underscores that the U.S.-Japan alliance is a pillar of Japanese foreign policy, probably does not want this to happen. The Hatoyama administration needs to use every channel of communication available to urge the U.S. to come to the negotiating table."

¶5. "GOJ Should Shift Focus to Moving Futenma out of Okinawa" The liberal Tokyo Shimbun argued (12/9): "It is high time for the GOJ to make full-fledged efforts to look into the options for moving Futenma out of Okinawa, as the Japanese people, the Okinawan people in particular, entrusted the DPJ with this task in the August general election. Public trust in politics will be lost if putting off a decision until next year ends

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up buying time for setting up a situation in which there are no options other than accepting the relocation of MCAS Futenma somewhere else in Okinawa."

¶6. "Crisis in U.S.-Japan Alliance Deepening Due to Delayed Decision on Futenma" An editorial in the business-oriented Nikkei claimed (12/9): "We are concerned that actions taken by the Hatoyama administration contradict its statements on the U.S.-Japan alliance as a central pillar, render the alliance irrelevant, and demonstrate Japan's shift toward China.... The diplomatic line taken by the Hatoyama administration, over which DPJ Secretary General Ozawa wields influence, is viewed as Japan's shift from the U.S. to China. This will cause anxiety to spread among countries in Southeast Asia, which have mixed feelings about rising China."

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